1: Jenness--191-192 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 787, 775

"A shaman's powers are due to the control he presumably exercises over certain spirits, which are either the spirits (the shades?) of certain animals or the shades of the Eskimo dead. One or two shamans were reputed to control also certain white men, but whether it was their shades or their living powers was never stated; in any case they were remote enough to count as dead. The familiar spirit is called either tornrak or tupilek, usually the former; the word keyugak, which is the usual term in the Mackenzie delta, seems to be unknown, and even tupilek may be a borrowed word, although I hardly think so. A shaman inspired or possessed by his familiar is said to onipkaktok (which farther west means 'to tell a story') or tornraktok. The Copper Eskimo makes no sharp and definite destinction between the shades of the dead, the spirits that have never been men or animals, and the spirits that the shamans control; there are separate names for both the first and last; but all alike may be, and usually are, called tornrait.

Control over any familiar may be obtained by purchase, as I have mentioned elsewhere; Uloksak, for example, bought his power from a shaman in Bathurst inlet. This statement, however, is only partly true, for all that the owner can impart is his goodwill, and a knowledge of how to approach and summon the particular spirit that he has sold; the rest depends on the spirit itself. The aspirant must go out to some lonely place and summon the spirit, which may or may not appear. Sometimes, however, a spirit

will come to a man without being invoked, and tell him that henceforth it will accompany him everywhere and place its powers at his disposal. Thus Uloksak, after his purchase of certain spirits, used to go hunting all alone and summon them to come to him. For a time none came, then one day when he was alone on an island several appeared one after the other. They forbade him to eat any part of the stomach of the caribou, but to eat plenty of its brains; if he obeyed them in this respect they promised to attend him and bestow on him magical powers. After giving him these injunctions they knocked him roughly about and changed him into a white man. In this condition he returned to camp, where other shamans held a séance over him and restored him to his proper form. He then became one of the most noted shamans in the country.

The case of the old man Ilatsiak was very similar. He was fishing for tom-cod, all alone, when a spirit first appeared to him. It resembled a young man in appearance, and was accompanied by other spirits, but these Ilatsiak could not see. He was terrified when it approached him, and asked it whether he was going to die, but the spirit answered that he would live for many winters and reach old age before he died. It caught a tom-cod and made him eat it, and the [192] eating of this fish gave him magical power. The spirit accompanied him back to his camp, conversing with him, and giving him various injunctions; thus he was forbidden to eat the intestines of any animal, only the

meat and the fat. The spirit disappeared as soon as they reached the camp.

Higilak gained her power in very much the same way. Her father had been a shaman and had two familiar spirits. After his death these came to her one day when she was all alone in the camp. In appearance they resembled two men, and they told her that as they had attended her father in his life-time so now they would attend on her. She too was forbidden to eat of certain foods, in her case the stomach and the skin of the salmon, on pain of losing her magical power. The spirits then disappeared, and when the other Eskimos returned to camp Higilak was already holding her first séance.

As a rule the shaman's spirits are nameless, though the two that came to Higilak were called Kitafoa and Kingmitok. As their attachment to their owners is voluntary, so they can desert them at will. If the shaman for example should break the food prohibitions his familiars have enjoined on him they will leave him immediately. Such a fate befel a man in Coronation gulf quite recently, the natives said, when the people were feasting on the meat of a caribou that some one had shot. Two shamans, a man and a woman, began to hold a seance, but in the midst of it they drank a little of the blood of the deer, although this had been prohibited to them. The man's familiar immediately left him, and he lost all his shamanistic powers. The woman, whose name was Mittik, walked away towards the sun up the side of a ridge. Suddenly she disappeared into the ground, and a moment afterwards a dog sprang out from the same

spot; then the dog disappeared and the woman took its place again. This occurred three or four times in the sight of all the people, then finally Mittik walked back to the camp in her human form, but with her faculties impaired. Other shamans laid hands on her, and with the aid of their familiars restored her to her senses. (1)

How and where the familiars live, and what becomes of them after the death of their owners, the Eskimos never trouble to consider. They still continue to exist, for Higilak could inherit her father's familiars. Obviously it would redound to the credit and influence of an Eskimo if he could say that he had control over the same spirits as some famous shaman of earlier days, even though he himself never acquired the same reputed skill and power. The shaman's power, in fact, depends rather on his own personality than on the familiars he controls. A man of weak character who models his life on those around him and is easily swayed by public opinion never attains to any great repute as a shaman. On the other hand a shrewd, strong-minded man, capable and successful in

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"1. Kaksavik, the Pallik (Hudson bay) shaman who visited our headquarters, was prohibited from eating the liver, the lungs and the pancreas of the seal."

all the ordinary affairs of life, a leader of public opinion rather than its servant, may easily attain to the greatest influence and be credited with the most extraordinary shamanistic powers."

1: Jenness--193-195 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 787

"According to the belief of the natives a shaman will often change his form and take on that of the animal by which he is possessed, or will assume at least some of its characteristics. (1) This metamorphosis may even take place in the presence of spectators, though sometimes it can occur only when the shaman is alone. Thus Ilatsiak said that when his grandmother was a child there was a shaman named Makettak who could change into a polar bear. He would bend down to the floor of the dance-house, resting his hands on the ground. Slowly his hands would change into polar bear's feet, then his arms become legs, and finally his whole body and head would assume the shape of the bear. In this state he would go out of the dance-house and visit the neighbouring houses, saying to the children in each as he entered, 'Stand up against the wall beside the door and then I shall not eat you.'

The natives have numberless stories of such transformations and believe implicitly in their truth. Higilak's father could change into a polar bear, but only when he was alone. Uloksak claimed the power of transforming himself into a white or a brown bear, a wolf and a white man. Ilatsiak's wife, who was a shaman like her husband, puts her

"1. In 1916, when Ilatsiak visited our station, he chose me as his associate in magic, because, as he asserted, I could change into any form I wished."

fingers into her mouth on one occasion; gradually her hands became the feet of a wolf, then her head and body began to change and finally only her legs remained human. Even Higilak, according to her daughter Kannayuk, had the same power; Kanneyuk had seen her change into a polar bear. I was present myself at one of her transformations, and in view of the interesting questions it raises regarding the psychology of these Eskimos, I shall describe the incident in detail. [194]

We were living at Lake Numikhoin, in the Colville hills, and had been considering the advisability of travelling to Lake Tahiryuak to look for the Prince Albert sound natives. Higilak accordingly gave a seance to discover whether we could safely make the journey there and back by sled before the snow melted. The seance was held about midnight (it was at the end of May, when the sun never sets below the horizon), and all the Eskimos save the little children gathered inside the tent. Higilak was sitting at the back, in a corner, and her husband Ikpakhuak was slightly in front of her, while I was sitting in the corner opposite Higilak. She began by delivering a long speech setting forward the whole question at issue. Suddenly she uttered cries of pain and covered her face in her hands. Dead silence followed for a few minutes, a silence that was only broken by an occasional remark uttered in a low tone by some one in the audience. Presently Higilak began to howl and growl like a wolf, then as suddenly ceased and raised her head, when, behold, two canine teeth, evidently a wolf's, were protruding one from each corner of her mouth.

She leaned over to Avranna and pretended to gnaw his head, then began to utter broken remarks which her audience caught up and discussed, though very little of them could be interpreted. Every now and then she had to put her hand up to her mouth to keep the teeth from falling out, and once she slyly pushed them right inside out of sight, pushing them out again a few minutes later. After about a quarter of an hour spent in this manner she suddenly broke out into cries of pain again and concealed her face in her hands behind Ikpakhuak's back. Then I saw her carefully drop one hand towards her long boot, into which she apparently slipped the teeth, for a moment later her face reappeared without them. This was the critical moment, the moment when the wolf's spirit inside her body gave its answer to the question at issue. A few broken words issued from her, uttered in a feeble falsetto voice that was almost inaudible. Her audience was bending eagerly forward drinking in every syllable. In about two minutes it was all over, and Higilak, after a few more cries of pain (the familiar was leaving her) followed by two or three gasps, resumed her normal bearing. The seance was now concluded, but some of the natives lingered for a few minutes to discuss the oracle that had been delivered to them. Higilak herself professed to be ignorant of it, for a shaman should not be conscious of utterances given under the inspiration of a familiar; accordingly she had to question some of the bystanders to find out what she had said. In speaking of this seance some time afterwards the natives stated as an incontestable fact that Higilak had been

transformed into a wolf.

To a critical and unsympathetic outsider it may seem that a seance of this type is simply a case of palpable fraud on the part of the shaman, and of almost unbelievable stupidity and credulity on the part of the audience. A little very amateurish ventriloquism, a feeble attempt at impersonation, and a childish and grotesque blending of the human and the animal, all performed in full daylight before an audience incapable of distinguishing between fact and fancy, between things seen and things imagined, or at least so mentally unbalanced that it reacted to the slightest suggestion and hypnotised itself into believing the most impossible things -- that perhaps is all there may seem to be in Eskimo shamanism. But let us examine its functions a little more closely and consider a number of other seances before we give our final judgment.

In the first place the Copper Eskimo shaman, whether man or woman, has no distinctive mark or dress of any kind, not even during the seances. (1) There is absolutely nothing in his appearance that would suggest to a stranger the possession of special

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"1. They differ from Mackenzie river shamans in this respect. See Stefansson, Anthrop. Papers, A.M.N.H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 366."

powers or functions. The shamans are not priests in any ordinary sense of the word. They may be of either sex, are self-appointed and act separately without forming a distinctive class or caste; further, they [195] perform at any time and in any place according to their fancy. No sanctity attaches to them, nor are they given special privileges. They resemble doctors rather than priests, doctors who give their services free in any public cause, but are paid for treating individuals. Thus the shaman receives no reward when he placates the spirits that cause the blizzards, or induces Kannakapfaluk to send the Eskimos plenty of seals; but if someone is ill and a shaman is called in he must be paid for his services, whether they are successful or not."

1: Jenness--195 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 787

"Let us take concrete instances of each of these points. There were eight shamans in Dolphin and Union strait during the winter of 1914. Three of these, Kimaiyok, Higilak and Arnauyuk, were women, the remaining five, Anauyuk, Agluak, Utugaum, Kuniluk and Kamingok, were men. Every one of them gave seances at one time or another and so testified to their possession of shamanistic powers; but for this nothing would have marked them off as different from the other natives. Ikpakhuak and Aiyallik, who were perhaps the two most influential men in the region, were neither of them shamans. In Coronation gulf, on the other hand, the two most influential men, Uloksak and Ilatsiak, were both shamans. Seances were held most frequently in winter when the concentration of the families in a single camp gave more intensity and fervor to social and religious life. The nights at this season are long and tedious, and the people seek distracion in the dance-house, where singing, dancing and drum-beating key them up to the proper pitch for religious or magical rites. Their religion is not dropped, however, with the winter, and seances may be given in the open air in broad daylight at any season of the year, and in any place. When we first entered the country our Mackenzie river native, Palaiyak, met the shaman Anauyuk hunting on the tundra. This was the first warning that any of the Copper Eskimos had received of our presence, so Anauyuk immediately went into a 'trance,' invoking his familiar spirit to find out whether Palaiyak and the

white men with him were friendly or not. (1) The same Anauyuk held a seance during a migration on December 19th, 1914, just at the commencement of the sealing season. It was concerned both with the supply of seals during the coming winter, and with the presence of white men in the country. Kimaiyok held another immediately afterwards, to discover the reason for a certain man's illness. Both of these seances took place in the open beside the sleds, with the natives standing in a ring around their shamans. Higilak held several seances in Victoria island during the spring and summer, some inside the tent, and some outside. In July, 1916, a native Tokalluak gave a performance beside the fishing creek near Cape Krusenstern. Clearly therefore the shaman is not bound by any restrictions as to time and place."

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"1. Cf. Stefansson, Anthrop. Papers, A.M.N.H., Vol. XVI, pt. I, p. 252."

1: Jenness--198-202 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 787

"Ilatsiak was dangerously ill while he was yet a boy, and all the professional attentions of the shamans failed to cure him. At last they told him to go outside and die, but instead of dying he recovered. Clearly the spirits favoured him, so he became a shaman, the most celebrated one in the country. While he was still but a youth he summoned some white men, who made their appearance in the dance-house before the astonished eyes of all the Eskimos. Maffa, a Tree river native who served us for a year, told us how Ilatsiak once threw a line out into the passage leading into the dance-house and roped in a number of spirits, tornrait. Maffa peered down through the door and saw them all in the passage. Ilatsiak spoke to them, but his language was strange, and all that Maffa could understand was that he was telling them to protect the people and to banish all sickness from their midst.

Ilatsiak's powers were derided by his cousin, who was also a shaman, so Ilatsiak clapped his hands and fire shot up from the floor. His cousin, nothing daunted, went outside and disappeared down a squirrel hole, re-emerging again from the ground a long way off. In the same way, the natives said, Ilatsiak himself once sank down through the snow floor of the dance-house, growing smaller and smaller till he vanished from sight altogether. A few minutes later he came up through the floor of another hut right beside some men who were sitting on the sleeping platform. Uloksak could remember

when he was a boy how white men had appeared in the dance-house at Ilatsiak's command. The people sent Uloksak outside, and when he went back again he was amazed to see that Ilatsiak had cut off a leg and an arm and thrown them to the back of the hut. He was sent out once more, and when he re-entered Ilatsiak was whole again. Uloksak even claimed to have done the same thing himself at one of his seances.

Ilatsiak was a prudent old man and never boasted of his miracles. He asserted that he was totally unconscious of his actions when inspired, and only learned of them afterwards from the spectators; hence he was not able himself to guarantee the truth of everything that was said about him. We noticed that he always listened with an air of detachment to the tales of all his miracles [199] as though they concerned someone else. On one occasion, his kinsmen told me, he and three other shamans gave a seance together. The four men held their hands behind their backs and stretched out their necks, holding their mouths wide open. Gradually their teeth changed to polar bears' teeth, then as gradually changed back again. On another occasion when two Netsilik shamans were terrifying the people by driving their knives through their stomachs so that the points protruded from their backs, Ilatsiak went into an empty hut alongside, changed himself into a polar bear, and, going back into the dance-house, so frightened the two Netsilik men that they fled from the settlement. On still another occasion Ilatsiak had sunk down through the floor of his hut into the sea below without

making even a hole in the ice. Another Bathurst inlet shaman had once remained five days and five nights under the water, wetting only his ankles and a small spot on his back.

Uloksak, having lost his seal-spear one day in a seal-hole, went home and summoned his familiars; the latter immediately made the spear come up through the floor of his hut. A still more remarkable story is told of Ilatsiak's younger brother. His wife lost her knife in the fall of the year, and in the following spring her husband resolved to find it. Going inside his hut he disappeared into the ground, and while the people were searching all about for him a large flat boulder suddenly came up through the floor, cracked in two, and ejected the knife on one side, and the shaman on the other. The man was rather dazed from his experience, but the shamans soon made him right again. Reminiscent of a well-known conjuring trick was a feat of Ilatsiak's, who drove a knife into the back wall of his hut, then stood out in the middle of the floor, removed his coat and picked up his knife from the ground at his feet. Another shaman took it and threw it out into the passage, making it come in again through the window. All these events took place in Bathurst inlet, where the shamans are reputed to have much more skill than those farther west. It was in the same region that some people threw their knives into the water through a hole in the ice, and the shamans made them float on the surface. Then they threw in their ice-chisels, and the shamans brought

them to the top also. (1) The Hudson bay native Kaksavik was overheard telling Uloksak how he once laid some matches on the ice and told them to fly to a settlement where the people were in need of them. His familiars then carried them away, and the natives found them near their huts.

Some natives were once mocking a Bathurst inlet shaman named Pannaktok, saying that he had no real power. He took off one of his mittens and laid it on the floor; presently it stood up on end and changed to a tiny man, who turned around and gazed on all the audience. Pannaktok stooped down and picked it up, and it changed to a mitten again. Then he laid both his mittens on the palms of his hands and held them out toward the spectators. First they changed to polar bear's claws, then two tiny bears jumped down and began to scratch on the floor; again they changed to mittens when he picked them up.

This same Pannaktok, according to native accounts, told a man to stand upright against the wall of the dance-house, then drove his seal-spear right through his chest and threw the weapon to the back of the hut. The natives had to hold the man up to keep

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"1. Cf. Stefansson, Anthrop. Papers, A.M.H.N., [sic] Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 293, and My Life with the Eskimo, p. 180."

him from falling. The shaman then made the spear return through his chest, leaving the man whole and unharmed. On the last day of 1915 three shamans, Koeha, Agluak and Anauyuk, held a seance in Dolphin and Union strait to dispel the baneful influence of some malicious shades. Agluak breathed on his hand and struck three of the spectators on the chests. They fell to the ground dead, but he took them by the hands and they came to life again. I did not witness this performance myself, but heard about it the following day. [200]

Uloksak described a seance at Bathurst inlet in which he had taken part. A woman, stripped to the waist, swallowed a snow knife till only the handle projected from her mouth. Another shaman took hold of it and pulled it out of her stomach. A third shaman, a native of Ekaluktok, then swallowed a mitten and made it come out of Uloksak's stomach, whereupon Uloksak himself swallowed it and made it come out of the stomach of a man named Manneratsiak. Manneratsiak immediately went outside, and when he entered the dance-house again all the upper half of his body had changed to a musk-ox while the lower parts remained human. In this state he walked about the dance-house for a little while, then went outside again and returned in his proper form. Meanwhile a woman named Allanak was looking after her hut some distance from the scene of these marvels. The shamans threw a line out into the passage of the dance-house, and began to haul it in again; the spectators then saw that the end was fastened around Allanak's

neck. The women herself knew nothing about it until she was told some time afterwards.

Kuniluk, a Puivlik shaman, professed to have changed to a white man on one occasion. He was crossing Dolphin and Union strait, he said, on his way to our station, when a fog came up and he lost his way. He summoned one of his familiars, which changed him temporarily into a white man and enabled him to find his way again without any difficulty.

Many a shaman lays claim to clairvoyance. In the spring of 1915 when a number of Eskimos were encamped beside our station this same man Kuniluk was accused by Uloksak of stealing two boxes of cartridges. After Kuniluk had left the camp Uloksak entered the station and announced that he intended to recover one of the boxes. He rolled up his sleeves like a conjuror, waved his arms about in the air, rolled his eyes, and finally, diving down into a dark corner of the room, brought forth a box. The trick was rather too transparent, for plainly he had left the box there earlier in the day. Our cook immediately accepted the challenge, and, knowing of another box that lay in a corner out of sight, he went through a similar performance and 'discovered' it. Uloksak was astounded, and could not make up his mind whether the cook's 'discovery' was a genuine one or simply a fraud like his own.

In December, 1915, a woman shaman prophesied that some people to the eastward

would fall over a cliff into a hole and perish. During the same performance she announced that evil spirits were threatening the lives of certain natives in the community. One of them was Avranna, so she forbade his wife Milukkattak to sew on the following day. Milukkattak had promised to make a sleeping bag for me, but in consequence of this prohibition she had to postpone it.

Many of the shamans' 'discoveries' are made in dreams. Two fox-traps were once stolen from my sled; Higilak told me a few days later that in her sleep she had seen a hand and fore-arm stealthily abstracting them, but could not identify the person. On another occasion I lost a tin full of matches, and a shaman discovered in a dream that a certain woman had stolen them. Ilatsiak asserted that his familiar often visited him in his sleep and revealed what was about to happen. Whenever he dreamed of small knives he knew that some children were sick. Sometimes the knives lay broken on the ground and he would rivet them together; then the children would grow well again. One morning he heard that a little boy, the son of a Mackenzie river woman in our service, had taken suddenly ill; immediately he announced that during his sleep he had repaired a knife that lay broken on the snow, so the boy would recover. The very next morning he entered our house and reported that during the night his spirit had told him that something had gone wrong on our schooner; it was the thing, he said, that made the vessel move. We thought that he must mean the propeller, for we had put a new one on during

the winter and had to keep the ice open around it. By a strange coincidence, however, we discovered [201] during the day --what Ilatsiak could hardly have been aware of -- that a boom we were using to roof our provision cache had snapped during the night owing to the weight of the snow above it. Two days later Ilatsiak announced again that in his dream he had seen a sled falling over a cliff, and expressed the hope that none of our sleds would meet with such a mishap during the spring.

These stories of shamanistic seances and miracles are from hearsay only, but Mr. Wilkins, our photographer, personally participated in a performance at the fishing creek near Bernard harbour. His interpreter for the occasion was the half-breed Patsy Klengenberg, and the account he gives is as follows:--

'On another occasion I visited a camp and there had veen very few fish caught for the last two or three days. They had all waited all that day and there had not been a sign of any fish making a run. About nine o'clock at night they thought they should hold a seance to try and induce a few to come along, for although they had a quantity of dried fish they did not care to use that up. A fellow called Igluhuk had arrived at the camp that evening and he had the reputation of being a great shaman. We were all standing about outside watching for signs of a run when one of the men asked me if I would help in a seance to try to make the fish come up the creek. I agreed to do my best, and they all crowded into the largest tent in the village. I was given a seat next to the shaman

which had been reserved for me, although I was almost the last to come in, and there was not room for any others to sit down after and some of them had to lean in and look through the door. At first it seemed as if they had forgotten their object, for the conversation was general and was mainly about the fishing at other seasons and on other days and at other creeks that season. After about thirty minutes of this, the shaman seemed to be doing most of the talking and gradually everyone else remained quiet.

'He seemed to be warming to his subject and would at intervals demand corroboration from one or other of the audience. Presently he started off in a kind of sing-song and the audience chatted to each other in whispers or nodded to each other across the tent. At intervals the shaman would address somebody in a language that they could not understand, and they would turn inquiringly to someone else for an explanation, but none would be forthcoming; no one seemed to know what it was that was asked. Then two or three would ask if it was so-and-so that was meant, or suggest something else, but the shaman would shake his head violently and repeat the question in the unknown jargon. After several fruitless attempts to make himself understood, and when the brows of the audience were wrinkled with thought, and most of them were bewildered in their efforts to understand, the old man gave a shout and clapped his hands to his forehead. Shutting his eyes, he started swaying backwards and forwards. He kept up the monotonous sing-song of an un-understandable sound for about an hour, while the other people talked

intermittently about several things, sometimes looking at the performer and shaking their heads and whispering to each other. Presently the shaman gave a shout and uttered some intelligible sounds and I was requested to hold on to his hand.

'An old woman sitting next but one to him searched around and found the copper head of an ice spear, and while I held his hand on one side and the owner of the tent held his shoulder on the other, she gave him a smart tap on the left side of the head with a lump of copper. At this he released his hand from his forehead and opened his eyes. Huge drops of perspiration stood out all over his face and his eyes were wild and bloodshot. We released our hold and he kept his backward and forward swaying motion but with renewed vigour. He was now talking intelligible language, but so fast that most of the people in the audience could not understand him and they would repeatedly shout questions to him or ask him to repeat things. He took no notice of them and soon began to point to one or the other of the audience and, fluttering his fingers [202] to indicate that the fish were swarming in the river, would prophesy that such and such a person would catch a number of fish.

'He kept this up for about half an hour, pointing mostly to two or three people who were, by the way, always successful in the contests when there were any fish to be caught. The whole performance had now lasted about three hours, and during that time no one had been keeping a look-out on the creek for fish, except perhaps the

children who had been playing about outside. They paid an occasional visit to the door of the tent but did not stay long, as they were evidently not interested in the old man's performance. The shaman's movements began to become normal at last, and although he was still frothing at the mouth, his questions and exclamations became less frequent and finally subsided altogether. There was now a hurried whispered consultation amongst the audience, and the old woman took a copper spear-head and gave the old fellow a smart tap on the right side of the head, and he looked round the audience in a dazed sort of way, as if he had just come out of a hypnotic trance. One of the men near the door gave a shout and, jumping up, ran for his spear and towards the creek, with the others following as fast as they could. None of them were prepared for fishing in the ordinary way by having taken off some of their clothes or put on long water-boots, and as they ran towards the creek, some of them slipped off what clothes they could, while others rushed for the water in what they were dressed in. It was apparent at first sight that there were a number of fish in the trap, and within a few minutes they had caught sixty, a big haul in ordinary times, and now an extraordinary one for it had seemed that the fish had stopped running the day before. Whether the old man's performance had anything to do with it or not the Eskimos fully believed that it had; but I am rather inclined to think that the success was due to the fact that while they were listening to the shaman they were not outside making a noise and frightening the fish

from coming into the trap, and that during the three hours' seance a number of stragglers had collected in the trap.

'The Eskimos were overjoyed at the success. The ones that the shaman had pointed out had surely caught the most fish, but then they always did when there were any fish to be caught. The man who had caught the most, and in whose house the seance had been held, after making a display of his catch to the people, cut a section from between the ventral fins of the largest fish and gave it to the shaman. He then cut a similar section from the next biggest and gave it to me. As these sections were only about an inch long and half an inch wide and as thick, and I noticed the shaman had swallowed his, I did likewise, to the evident satisfaction of the people. The only explanation of this that I could gather through the interpreter was that it was a present for making the fish come into the trap.'

In regard to this seance the interpreter, Patsy --who, by the way, was thoroughly sceptical of all Eskimo shamanism -- told me that Igluhuk (or Iglisiak as he should be called) had prophesied that a certain boy Hogaluk would capture three fish, and that Patsy himself would get only two. In both cases his prophesy proved true."

1: Jenness--203-209 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 787

"Of the many seances that I witnessed myself among the Copper Eskimos at one time and another, a few are worth describing because of the light they shed on the psychology of the natives and on their religious beliefs. Among the earliest was a performance by Kaminggok at the Liston and Sutton islands in January, 1915. The people had been singing and dancing after their usual custom in the dance-house when he entered the ring on his own initiative and announced that he would hold a seance. He began in the orthodox manner with an oration, then suddenly uttered cries of pain and covered his eyes with his hand as though he were in the greatest agony. Soon he raised his head again, looking round with wild staring eyes, trying to speak apparently but unable to utter a sound. The audience questioned him, suggesting whatever they thought he was trying to say, and he nodded eagerly to the native who guessed correctly. In this way he told them that two men to the eastward had just died, one of them having been killed by the spirit of Cat's Cradles. (1) Again he uttered cries of pain and slapped his hand

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"1. The natives of North Alaska and of the Mackenzie delta believe that the opening stage in certain cat's cradle figures, or a development from it called 'Two Labrets,' has the power of driving away this spirit if performed more rapidly than the spirit itself can perform it. The man who had just died, it was said, had been defeated by the spiritin [sic] the contest."

to his forehead, then began to speak in a weak falsetto voice about two of the local Eskimos and their lack of success in sealing. Something they had done with a hatchet, he said, had frightened the seals away, but he (i. e., his familiar spirit) had removed the hatchet so they would soon kill more seals again. A third time he cried out in pain, then said in his natural voice, but in a low and rather husky tone, that he could see some dogs stealing fish. A native suggested that it might be my dogs, but he said, 'No'. Several of us then left the dance-house to find out whether what he said was true, and we discovered that the natives' own dogs had stolen some fish belonging to an Eskimo woman. How Kaminggok could have known about it I have no idea, for no one else had heard any noise. His performance was almost over by the time we returned. He closed his eyes suddenly and began to stagger; his soul, nappan, was returning, my Mackenzie river native whispered to me, or perhaps it was his familiar leaving him. A by-stander laid his hand on the back of the shaman's neck, and another man laid his on the side of it, while, at the request of a third native, I rapped him on the head with some matches. The first rap had no effect, nor the second, so, by the natives' advice, I placed my hand on the side of his head. Immediately he opened his eyes and gazed at me with an uncomprehending stare, then smiled, pulled himself together, and began an ordinary conversation with some of his audience. Throughout his performance there had been nothing so strange as to suggest an abnormal state of mind; the whole affair

had resembled rather the trick of a fairly clever impostor. Palaiyak, however, my Christianized Mackenzie river interpreter, thoroughly believed in his inspiration, asserting that several familiars had successively entered his body and that he was really a great shaman.

A few days later Kaminggok gave another performance in the dance-house. I was projecting a journey to an Akulliakattak settlement on the morrow, with Kaminggok and another native as my guides; the seance was held to discover what fortune we would have. It resembled very closely his earlier performance: first, the oration, then the cries of pain, a period of dumbness during which the audience made guesses at what he was trying to say and he answered by nodding, [204] a moment's gasping excited talk in a falsetto tone, more gasps, a glance at the roof and a sharp cry of pain as his soul returned to his body (or his familiar left him), and the performance was over. Anauyuk, who held a seance immediately afterwards, was much more normal in his actions. He spoke in his natural voice, though a little abruptly once or twice, and told the Eskimos that the shade, tarrak, of a dead man had stolen the soul, nappan, of Wikkiak, a native who had been ailing for some days. Wikkiak would now recover, however, for my dog Jumbo had brought his soul back again.

A young man named Agluak held a seance on December 20 of the same year, to discover why seals were so scarce and to bring them back to the Eskimos' hunting ground.

After the usual dance he took his place in the centre of the ring and delivered a short preliminary oration, in which he confessed that he was not very expert in shamanistic matters. The audience encouraged him to proceed nevertheless, so he began a second and more elaborate harangue, this time about the absence of seals. Suddenly he stopped-- he was invoking his familiar spirit. His breathing became hard and loud, his eyes wild and staring, and his features grim and distorted. Turning this way and that he gesticulated with his hands, and nodded whenever one of his audience guessed the proper interpretation. The women, we learned, had been making new deerskin clothes, and boiling caribou meat, both of which were tabooed at this season. A sudden inspiration struck him on seeing me standing outside the ring with my pipe in my mouth, and he told us by gestures that the seals refused to rise to the surface because of the taint of my tobacco. For all these reasons the Eskimos had experienced no success in their sealing. Once he pointed at me and waved his arm to the west, but no one could understand what he meant. A few minutes afterwards he made similar gestures in reference to Uloksak, who simply shook his head and turned away with studied indifference, remarking that he could not understand. Agluak then told us in pantomime how many seals various people in the ring would capture. He would point to a man, go through the motions of spearing a seal in its hole, then hold up one or more fingers to indicate the number killed. He seemed to be rather sleepy, however, for [205] once or twice he

passed his hand over his forehead as though to revive his faculties.

Up to this stage he had maintained an absolute silence. Now broken words began to drop from his lips, elucidated by gestures, but the words were hardly more intelligible than the gesture language that had preceded them. Once he ejaculated 'What's this? Something being cooked, caribou meat.' We gathered that the seals were sleeping and that he had to go and stir them up. Further, that he should be given liberal portions of any seals that might be caught, because of his services in bringing them back to the hunting grounds. At last he said taima taima 'Enough, enough,' passed his hand across his forehead and terminated his seance.

In the general conversation that ensued Agluak reaffirmed that if the women would refrain from sewing the men would have good luck again in their sealing. But his shamanistic powers were not regarded very seriously by most of the natives. He had dropped his mittens during the seance, and was looking around for them when it was over; some one at the back of the hut threw them into his face, causing a general laugh. The women resented his prohibition against sewing and for the most part disregarded it. At least one of them too had no scruples about boiling more caribou meat the very next day (the house was built on the shore of one of the islands, and had gravel, not ice, beneath the snow floor, so that she could say they were camped on the land, not on the sea ice). Uloksak seemed to treat the whole matter as a joke, but then he was

somewhat of a free-thinker, at least as regarded some of his fellow-shamans. With reference to my smoking, I told the natives that just as the smoke floated up into the air, so the seals would float up to the surface, and they quite agreed with this interpretation.

Another shaman, Kuniluk, held a seance about half an hour after Agluak, but I had left the dance-house. A month later he held another. The weather had been very stormy all day, and the Eskimos, unable to go out sealing, had spent most of their time in the dance-house. Kuniluk began in the usual manner with an oration, followed by a sudden cry of pain. He clapped his hand to his forehead and uttered a few more cries as his familiar, a dog, passed into his body. Now he gazed wildly round the ring and began to jabber meaningless syllables, accompanied by elaborate gestures of explanation. Once or twice he was heard to say naukun naukun 'Which way, which way', but no one could understand what he meant. Occasionally he would direct his gibberish to some definite individual, and the rest of the audience would tell that person to assent. These proceedings lasted for about ten minutes, then suddenly Kuniluk uttered some cries of pain, stooped down and howled like a dog, his familiar. After a few howls he began to jabber again, still stooping. Thus he continued for perhaps a quarter of an hour, then, with a few cries of pain, he straightened up, and, speaking in his natural tongue, told the people that their ill-luck in sealing was due to some of them having

played cat's cradles after the return of the sun, while others had sewn deerskin fringes on their coats during the dark days. He then uttered a few more cries of pain as his familiar left him, and the seance terminated. It had lasted altogether about an hour, and left the man quite exhausted. Uloksak, who stood near me in the audience, murmured in my ear just before it commenced, 'Kuniluk is no shaman'; and when it was ended he wanted me to tell Kunilik[sic] to give a real seance, as though all that we had just witnessed were only the prelude.

After Kuniluk had brought his performance to a close a woman named Arnauyuk entered the circle and proposed to give a seance. The people encouraged her to proceed, so she began her preliminary oration; but before she had proceeded very far she broke down in self-conscious laughter and the audience laughed with her. She pulled herself together and began again, and again she broke down, so, after one more unsuccessful attempt, she retired to the ring. Her familiar, the natives said, had refused to take possession of her. [206]

The winter of 1915-16 was unusually stormy, and for days at a time the Eskimos were confined to their houses and prevented from sealing. On February 3rd, a man named Utugaum held a seance with the object of petitioning Kannakapfaluk to stop the blizzards and let the people go sealing again. He opened with a long oration --about two ducks in some place or other, a giant fish in Lake Akulliakattak, two men living near some

islands, another man at Umingmaktok (Kent peninsula) who had knocked down two poles, and about some one in the moon. He used vague and mysterious words, and his audience had to puzzle out his meaning, partly from his words, and partly from the gestures that accompanied them. In this case, as often, no one had any idea of what he was talking about. His oration lasted fully twenty minutes, then he stooped down and began to speak in a thin piping voice, quite unlike the strident tones in which his oration had been delivered. He now said that he was no longer a man, but an animal (my notes do not say what animal). He was searching for Kannakapfaluk, he said, so that he might drag her up to the surface, but he could not find her. Thus he stood for about two minutes, then straightened up, pressed his hand to his forehead, heaved a few sighs and closed the performance. There were a few interesting features in connection with it. At the commencement all the little children were sent to the back of the dance-house. My interpreter Patsy was playing and laughing with them till the old shaman Anauyuk turned around and scolded them, saying that they should on no account laugh during a seance; however, they appeared to take very little notice of his warning. I moved to leave the dance-house as soon as the performance was over and one of the natives stopped me, saying, 'You mustn't go out while the sha-[207] man is performing'; but when I pointed out that Utugaum had finished he waived his objection. Uloksak had been telling the people earlier in the evening about the two pillars that hold up the sky,

and Utugaum probably had these in his mind when he spoke of the two poles that a man had knocked down. There is a special incantation that is generally sung before a shaman goes in search of Kannakapfaluk, but for some reason or other it was omitted on this occasion.

Tokalluak, a Coronation gulf native, held a seance at the fishing creek near Cape Krusenstern in July, 1916, when a band of natives had gathered together to spear the salmon. He invoked his familiar and uttered some brief remark, then laughed and hid his face in his hands. His laugh, however, had caused his familiar to leave him and he had to recall it. This happened repeatedly, for he seemed to be unable to control his laughter whenever any of his audience laughed. He spoke of a boy whose legs were too long (Patsy, my interpreter), and of a man with long whiskers (myself) whom he called Patsy's father, and accused of frightening away the fish by dipping an iron cup into the creek. (Unluckily for Tokalluak's credit, the Eskimos had just caught a phenomenal number of fish that day). Finally he tabooed all sewing on the following day and terminated his seance.

Higilak held several seances during the spring and summer of 1915 in addition to the one that has been described already. The most interesting of them all took place at the end of July at a time when I was seriously ill in the Eskimo camp. I do not know what familiar possessed her, except that it was the shade of some Eskimo long dead.

She began in the usual manner with an oration. There was a strained look in her eyes as she spoke, and a tension in her face, as though she were concentrating herself for a great effort. Suddenly she emitted several deep ventriloquistic cries, followed by shrill falsetto utterances from her head. Then she began to gabble in high falsetto, first about the scarcity of fish, for which some dead person was to blame, then about my sickness, for which another dead person she named was responsible. Suddenly she cried aggioktok, 'A malignant shade is troubling me', and bowed her head, concealing her face in her hands. Avranna asked, 'Who is it?' and in a faint voice she replied, 'Arnaktak' (Arnaktak was a relative of Ikpakhuak who had died in the previous winter). Ikpakhuak struck her on the head, and drove away the obstructing shade. Almost immediately another obstructed her, and Avranna asked of it again, 'Who are you?' The shade, instead of answering the question directly, merely said, in faint accents issuing from Higilak's lips, 'Here I am', and added some further remarks which I could not hear. Milukkattak now struck Higilak on the head and drove it away. A third shade took possession of her and Avranna held a long conversation with it. It finally promised to be good, nagoyok, whereupon a sigh of relief went up from the audience, and Higilak, after one or two gasps, came to her senses. A short discussion followed the performance, after which everyone retired to bed.

When Arnaktak, the native just mentioned, had died, I was a hundred miles away

in Coronation gulf. Nevertheless some of the Eskimos accused me of murdering him, because, as they said, he had perpetrated some petty theft on me. There was some disagreement, however, so Uloksak, the most famous shaman among the western Copper Eskimos, was asked to find out what precisely was the cause of his death. The seance took place in a dance-house beside our station, and, having rather a personal interest in the matter, I went down to see it. Our cook, Sullivan, was present also, though from first to last he had no idea of what was happening. The people arranged themselves in a ring and began to sing, rather to while away the time than from any other reason, for their singing was very half-hearted and they did not trouble to bring out the drum. Uloksak sat outside the circle on a sleeping platform, leaning against his second wife and apparently quite unconcerned with what was taking place. Suddenly [208] his whole frame drooped heavily against her, and gasping cries broke from his lips, while a quiver ran through his audience. He staggered into the centre of the ring and motioned for me to stand beside him; of Sullivan, who was on the other side of the dance-house, he took no notice. A torrent of wild gibberish flowed from his lips for about five minutes. His father, who was standing beside me, said that it was white man's language, and asked me whether I did not understand it. Uloksak heard the question and paused, looking at me with an expression that I interpreted to mean, 'Back me up in this matter'; I therefore replied that it resembled the speech of white men,

and nodded my head in understanding whenever he seemed to address his gibberish expressly to me. Almost immediately afterwards he dropped into his proper language, and speaking a few words about the dead Arnaktak, said that another of his familiar spirits, a dog, would take possession of him. Thereupon he crouched down like a dog, pushed his head into another man's stomach, and growled. In broken and only half-audible tones he told them how Arnaktak had come to die; a white man far away had killed him by sorcery, stealing his soul, while we, the white men who were living amongst them, were friendly and meant them no harm. Again he rose erect and with wild eyes poured forth a stream of gibberish -- the language of white men, comprehensible to myself alone. Naturally we soon arrived at a mutual understanding; he would jabber at me for a minute, and I would answer in the first words of French that came into my head, using French so that Sullivan might not understand. After a time Uloksak turned to the natives and dropped a word or two in Eskimo. They had to guess at his meaning, and he nodded whenever they guessed correctly; his gestures indeed were almost lucid enough to make words unnecessary. In this way he repeated that Sullivan and myself and all the other members of our expedition were friendly towards them and sought them no harm, and that Arnaktak's death was due to another man far away. Then once again he crouched down and gasped a few times, while an Eskimo on one side and I on the other caught hold of him and kept him from falling. His familiar,

the dog, now left him, and a moment afterwards he stood up and smiled.

The seance was over, but Uloksak was too shrewd a man to lose his opportunity. His audience was in the proper mood to be deceived by any fraud, and here was a rare opportunity of enhancing his prestige. He renewed his gibberish talk, and I nodded comprehendingly, throwing in occasionally a word or two of French, which he of course understood equally well; thus an animated conversation was carried on between us for a time. He next began to dance after the manner of the Bear lake Indians, and invited Sullivan to join him, which he did, much to the enjoyment of the spectators. This Indian dancing bears a considerable resemblance, if indeed it is not derived from, some Scotch dances, so that Sullivan had no difficulty in keeping up his part. Uloksak then dragged two women into their dance, one of them being his second wife. Whenever he wanted Sullivan to do anything, he jabbered at me in his gibberish, but took care to explain by his gestures so that I could understand and interpret. The strain on both of us, however, was rather too heavy; moreover there was a danger of the fraud being detected if we prolonged the performance too much. I pleaded weariness therefore, and moved to leave the dance-house. Uloksak immediately assented and preceded me outside, intending to speak to me; but as two of the Eskimos followed us he had to make use of his gibberish again, pointing first to our station, then to his house, as much as to say, 'Go back now, and let us meet later in my hut.' I replied in French, dropping

the one Eskimo word akago, 'to-morrow', and motioning towards his house. He at once nodded and retired, while I went back to our station.

The outcome of this seance was eminently satisfactory to both of us. Uloksak had vastly increased his prestige in the eyes of the natives by this proof that he understood the language of the white men; while I was acquitted of [209] an unpleasant charge of murder, which might have endangered my work, if not my life, among these Eskimos. The following day I presented Uloksak with a cast-off Burberry snow-shirt, a very valuable garment in his eyes. The account that Sullivan gave of the seance to the other members of the expedition was rather amusing; the only words he had understood, of course, were the directions I gave him during the dancing. He was greatly alarmed at one period, he said, for he thought that Uloksak was urging the natives to kill us; then when Uloksak talked gibberish and I answered in an equally unknown tongue he thought that I had been hypnotized."

1: Jenness--209-213 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 787

"The greatest of all the shamans among the Copper Eskimos was Ilatsiak. In March, 1916, he guided a large band of Bathurst inlet natives to our station at Bernard harbour and camped beside us for about three weeks. Seeing us record one or two songs on the phonograph he asked to be allowed to summon his familiar spirit, Kingaudlik, and under its inspiration to speak into the machine. He was rather short of stature, so we had to raise him on a box to bring his face level with the horn; perched on this box he protruded his face into the bell of the horn and nervously kicked his legs out behind him, one after the other, in the manner of a person skipping over a rope. The usual preliminaries of a shamanistic performance were omitted; he merely paused a moment to collect his wits (or to give his familiar time to enter him), then said what he had to say and stood down. Some of the words are scarcely audible in the record owing to his jumping. As usual too, it is difficult to attach any meaning to them, but the literal interpretation of this first oracle was, 'Where? Give me liver, liver; it is excellent. I hear speech' --a remark that Ilatsiak's adopted son understood to mean that his father's familiar Kingaudlik was asking for some liver.

This seance not being very satisfactory, Ilatsiak was requested to give another similar to those he habitually gave in the dance-house. When everything was ready he came forward and asked for a cup of water. He gazed into it very intently for a few seconds, then said that something was wrong on our schooner; some one on board was going to be

drowned. He then drank the water, solemnly shook hands with all the white men present, stepped up to the phonograph and, at the word takki, 'Begin', delivered the oracle that is translated below. Mingled with his words are the remarks of his Eskimo kinsmen, especially of his wife, whose voice, though she sat quite six feet away from the machine, can be heard quite distinctly on the record; for the natives regarded the seance as a perfectly genuine one, and tried to interpret Ilatsiak's utterances, and enlarge on them, just as they would have done in the dance-house. Ilatsiak gave a gasp at the conclusion and breathed very hard for a moment or two as his familiar left him, after which he sat down and enquired of the natives what he had said. Later in the day he invoked another of his familiars, Annakok, and we recorded yet another oracle.

It was not considered advisable to allow Ilatsiak to hear his own records, but after he had returned east two natives from the same region who had heard the oracles delivered helped me to reduce them to writing and to translate them into English. In many places the words were quite unintelligible even to them, for, as they took pains to remark, it was not the shaman himself who was speaking but the spirit that possessed him, and spirit utterances are not easily understood by the laity. Neither seance was in any way fictitious, either to Ilatsiak himself or to his audience. Even the Eskimos who heard the records only discussed them as real oracles, and had implicit faith in their verity.

The first oracle was as follows: --

'. . . . Did you do it? Did you do it? It is terrifying. Himiamin, (1) did you do it? The fish's eyes, the fish, they say. Did you do it? The fish, they say, ate the people. It is terrifying. The fish ate the people, it swallowed [210] them they say; people afar off, it destroyed them all, they say. People here, the fish, the salmon, the thing that moves them, it is going to eat them, it is dangerous. These people unhappily it ate, it ate; those unhappily it terrifies; these people, dangerous, these, unhappily, the fish, these, it is going to eat them down there. Ukumarauta's shade, it seized him, him, out over the sea, Ukumarauta, the big island, intending to eat him, its shade, out over the sea, seized him.'

(Here there are some indistinct words in the record, the comments of Ilatsiak's wife in the background. Ilatsiak continues:--)

'These people, these people, yes. How is it? These people, it seized out over the sea.'

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"1. Himiamin was said to be the name of a woman shaman in Bathurst inlet."

(Again there are constant interruptions by the audience, and Ilatsiak continues:--)

'Yes, Ukumarauta, the people, it, the fish, it seized, seized, it, the fish. The dogs, the dogs, these, these people, these, these people, their kinsfolk, those away over there, the Indians too, it kills with its heavy weight, it eats them, destroying them without difficulty. Yes, it seized, it seized that one, it seized, it seized, yes. But I speaking plainly I think I am.'

(At this point the voice of his wife is distinctly audible, saying, 'Speak plainly, speak out.')

'Yes, from the sea, the salt sea, it seized, hu, hu, yes, they are going to eat, yes, next summer, they are going to eat, hu, hu, hu.'

Only the general drift of the meaning is distinguishable from these broken utterances. With regard to the first part the natives explained that there is a huge salmon, as large as an island, which swallowed two kayaks once with their occupants, and almost devoured two others at the same time. This was in a lake somewhere beyond Bathurst inlet where the Eskimos secure caribou, not with bows and arrows, but with pit-falls. The salmon is frightened and hides when the shamans hold a seance and talk about it. [211]

The passage about Ukumarauta refers to a large stone of that name in a country to

which the daylight never reaches. The stone is sometimes called the 'Big Island,' sometimes 'The Heavy One,' ukumaura. Occasionally a shaman will summon it to come and have a feast; then it falls unseen from the sky and kills many people with rocks, and other shamans (Higilak was instanced as an example) have to drive it back again. A shaman too will sometimes make it drop on an approaching kayaker and kill him, though it is sometimes affirmed that the magic stone uses a small spear to kill its victims. The stone can sing like a man, and the shamans have a special incantation or invocation, akeun, for it, but my informants did not know the words. A Bathurst inlet shaman, the Pannaktok who has been mentioned already, uses the stone for one of his familiars. In the present oracle the stone proposed to 'eat' the expedition when it left Bernard harbour. The final portion of the record is a protestation by the familiar that it is speaking only the truth.

The second oracle that Ilatsiak delivered was equally obscure. The first part of it had reference to the thefts that some of the local natives had perpetrated on us during the period of Ilatsiak's visit. Then he spoke of his joy at my promise to pay him liberally for relating some of the old traditions of his people. The last portion referred to a great fish that had swallowed a ship, and would swallow our schooner also unless our magic was strong enough to prevail against it. The oracle concluded, like the previous one, with an asseveration by the familiar that it spoke nothing but the truth. Ilat-

siak was about to step down after this performance when he suddenly recollected (or so it seemed to us) that he had omitted the usual gasps and grunts when his familiar left him; accordingly he turned back to the phonograph and finished in the orthodox manner. (1)

In all these seances, except those of Uloksak and Higilak, my own limited knowledge of the language was supplemented by the services of an interpreter, either the Mackenzie river native, Palaiyak, or the half-breed Patsy Klengenberg. In every case the familiar spirit was supposed to have entered the body of the shaman and to have used the man as its medium. But there is an altogether different type of seance, divination by lifting, (2) of which I have already given one example. I saw only one shaman, Higilak, employ this method, and never had an interpreter at any of her performances. My knowledge of the ordinary conversational language was very imperfect, and shamans in

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"1. Cf. Boas, Bulletin A. M. N. H., Vol. XV., p. 156 et seq.; Stefansson, "My Life with the Eskimo," p. 291 et seq."

"2. Cf. Crantz, Vol. I, p. 210 et seq., 214; Boas, Bulletin A. M. N. H., Vol. XV, pp. 135, 512; Stefansson, Anthrop. Papers, A. M. N. H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 360 et seq."

their seances make use of old or semi-poetical expressions that greatly increase the difficulty of understanding them, a seal, for example, may be referred to as 'the thing that has blubber.' For my interpretations in this class of seances therefore I had to depend rather on my own observations at the time and the subsequent explanations of the spectators or of Higilak herself. It is not at all impossible that I may have missed the correct interpretation in some instances, but by describing a number of these seances a fairly correct idea can perhaps be gleaned of the religious notions that lie behind them. All except the last one took place on Victoria island during the summer of 1915.

On May 9, all the adults of our party gathered in Ikpakhuak's tent a little before midnight. Ikpakhuak himself was sitting at the back of the sleeping platform, with Higilak in front, while I sat opposite her at the outer end of the platform. Higilak rolled her coat into a bundle, made a running noose of her belt, and slipped it around the head of the coat. The loose end of the cord, with its toggle, she kept in her left hand, while the four fingers of her right hand rested on the coat under the noose, and the thumb on top of it. Her familiar spirit, in this case her atatsiak (mother's father ?), was summoned [212] into the bundle, and made its presence known by the increase in weight when Higilak tried to lift it. Both Higilak and the spectators then asked it various questions, and the answer 'Yes' or 'No' resulted according as she found it heavy

or light; if the bundle was heavy the answer was 'Yes,' if light, 'No.' Once Kesullik wanted to test it after Higilak had said that it was heavy, but she would not let him. She yawned several times during the performance, and once or twice the conversation drifted off on to other topics, but no one seemed to be credulous of the answers that were given. As far as I could gather their questions were all concerned with the prospects of securing an abundance of fish and caribou during the next few months. A coat when tied up and used for this ceremony is given the special name of kila.

On May 26th Higilak questioned the kila again, this time to discover whether any Prince Albert sound natives would visit our camp at Lake Tahiryuak. The ceremony took place out of doors, because the air was warm and our little tent was too small to hold all the audience. The kila affirmed that they would come to us, but I gathered that Higilak was not altogether satisfied with the reply, for the next morning when no one was near she asked the same question of me. Two days later she borrowed my two coats (the outer and inner attigi), and divined again. I was told to say to the bundle that being a 'white' man it was to be heavy for an affirmative answer and light for a negative. (This was contrary to the usual regulations.) Higilak and the audience then asked it one question after another, and at each one she tested its weight. I noticed that whenever the kila was light she drew it straight up, but whenever it was heavy she gave a slight twist to her hand so that the back of it was pressing down on the bundle while the fingers

and wrist were ostensibly trying to raise it. I gathered that the spirit in the kila on this occasion was one of my familiars, not one of Higilak's.

The following evening, not seeing Ikpakhuak in the camp, I asked Kanneyuk whether he were fishing on the lake; at least that was the question I intended to ask her, but through a slight grammatical error what I actually said was 'Has he caught a fish?' It so happened that about that time Ikpakhuak did catch a large trout at a fishing-hole a few hundred yards away. Some of the natives therefore thought that I must possess second-sight, and wanted to know whether the Prince Albert sound natives were not already on their way to visit us. Even Ikpakhuak, when he returned a little while afterwards, supported their request that I should allow Higilak to tie a cord round my head or my foot and divine, as with the kila, by lifting it and testing its weight; however, when evening came, she used my coat instead. In the meantime Kesullik pretended to hold a seance on his own account; he asked various questions of an old tobacco can, rapping it with a stick for 'yes' and not rapping it at all for 'no'.

Higilak held an interesting performance when we were returning from Lake Tahiryuak to Lake Numikhoin. The immediate cause was a sudden, apparently spontaneous, bark from one of my dogs. The Eskimos had been much concerned about it, fearing that it foreboded someone's death, and Milukkattak had asked me whether the dog tornraktok, i.e., was acting as a medium for its familiar spirit. (Even a dog, it seems,

may have its familiars). (1) Higilak therefore borrowed my coat after I had turned into my sleeping-bag, and, making a kila of it, began to ask it questions. First she demanded, 'Is there anyone in it?', and after a minute or two the kila became heavy --a spirit had entered. Through a series of questions she elucidated the fact that one of us was in danger of death, and after testing two or three names it was finally fixed on Tusayok. Higilak now addressed herself to me and asked whether Tusayok had been successful or not in his fishing, for he had remained behind at Lake Numikhoin a fortnight before when the remainder of the party went on to Lake Tahiryuak. I said, 'Probably not,' on the presumption that as [213] we had all been rather unsuccessful before we left Lake Numikhoin, so Tusayok afterwards would probably have met with little better luck. This appeared to be the answer she wanted. She then said that a man had entered the kila and asked me whether I saw him, but I tried to avoid the question and asked her instead if she had. She said 'No, I was the only person who had', an assertion she made on her own account, or possibly judging by some expression on my face. Next she asked whether it was a white man, and I told her to question it; the answer was 'yes.' One or two other questions were addressed to it, then she turned to me again and asked

"1. Cf. Stefansson, Anthrop. Papers, A.M.N.H., Vol.XIV, pt.I, p.342."

whether the 'man' had not gone out of the kila; when I said, 'There is no one in it' she requested me to put him back in again. I told her to continue her divining, and the kila immediately became heavy again -- 'the man' had re-entered. She now wanted to know whether it was a kinsman of mine, and I told her it was not. Again she questioned it about our fortunes, and the answer, as she finally announced it to us, was, 'He is going to be friendly towards the people.' After addressing a few more remarks to the kila, the meaning of which I could not follow, she found that it had become light again, indicating that the 'man' had left it. Accordingly, after requesting my permission, she removed her belt from round it and terminated the ceremony. The theory of the natives seemed to be that as it was my dog that had barked -- the dog of a white man -- it must be a white man's shade that was trying to do them harm, and I should be able to help them to deal with it; further, that the man, or rather the shade that was conceived to enter the kila, if not a familiar spirit of mine, was yet to some extent at least under my control. It was for this reason that Higilak had sought my cooperation."

1: Jenness--214-217 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 787

"I understood rather less of what was said at a divination that was held just a week later. There was no definite reason for this performance as far as I could learn. When I asked Higilak why she was holding it, she merely said aggioktoraluk, 'the shades of the dead constantly beset us.' My coat was used again for the kila, and two shades appeared to enter it at once, for Higilak said tamna aiparivaga ukumailivaktok 'the one accompanying him is making it heavy.' Mikinrok thumped the sides and head of the kila to drive it out, but without effect. I was then asked to thump, and this time the result was satisfactory. Higilak asked me who it was that had entered the kila, and when I suggested at random that it might have been 'Charlie', the natives immediately identified it with a white man of whom they had heard (Captain Klengenberg?). Another shade entered the kila after 'Charlie' had gone; this time it was 'Joseph.' 'Charlie' had announced that Ikpakhuak was threatened with evil, but when he had been driven out, and after him 'Joseph', everything seemed to be propitious again. A fortnight later Higilak again used my coat for divining, and this time the only spectators were the little boy Haugak and myself. The other natives of our party had all gone out hunting with Ikpakhuak, and a sudden fog that descended over the land had prevented them from finding their way back. The fog was due, Higilak thought, to certain shades of the dead which entered the kila one after another. Some were the shades of white men, so I was asked to name them -- 'William, May' etc. -- and to tell them that we were good people with-

out evil intentions. Others were the shades of Eskimos, one being Nerialak, Higilak's first husband, and another Arnaktak, a relative who had died the previous winter; these, her fellow-countrymen, Higilak propitiated as I had mine. The majority of them were readily appeased, for they left the kila immediately. Others refused to go, and the kila remained very heavy, although by Higilak's direction I thumped on its sides and head; finally she had to slash the top of the coat with her knife in order to eject them. When all the shades had thus been disposed of in one way or the other the kila announced that the fog would lift on the morrow, and that Ikpakhuak and his party would be able to find their way back to camp.

I was taken very ill shortly after this, and my condition remained serious for several weeks. Ikpakhuak and Higilak became greatly alarmed, and the latter held a 'consultation' over me. She used my coat to divine with, though she made a pillow for it out of her foot-gear. First she orated about the disagreeableness of being ill, how it made everyone unhappy, with other remarks in the same strain. Then, addressing the kila, she enquired whether my system was out of order of its own accord, and the kila replied 'No.' 'Who caused it then? Was it a white man?' 'No.' 'Some one from Great Bear lake?' 'No.' 'A western Eskimo?' 'Yes.' I was told to enquire his name, and suggested Aiyakak. The kila answered 'Yes.' 'What are you doing here,' said Higilak,

'Jenness is not here, he's a long way away. What do you want here?' (1) and Ikpakhuak, at her signal, struck the kila with the edge of her [215] knife. This disposed of one shade, but almost immediately the kila became heavy again through the entrance of another, Alak, as I suggested. Ikpakhuak tried to evict it in the same manner, but failed. Then a man suggested that Higilak should breathe on the bundle, and this was successful. 'It's heavy again,' she said a moment later. Ikpakhuak caught hold of the cord and said, 'No, it's light.' 'Heavy, surely,' she replied, not too well pleased, I fancied, at her husband's interference. 'Go on,' said a woman spectator. Higilak did not trouble to enquire the name of the shade this time, but merely said 'Go away,' and struck the kila with her knife and breathed on it. The bundle at once became light; all the malignant shades had been disposed of, and nothing remained presumably to prevent my recovery. A year later Higilak reminded me of this performance, and claimed that she had been instrumental in curing me of my illness.

Of the other divining performances that Higilak held at various times one has a certain interest for our purpose. It took place in August, at a time when no caribou had

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"1. Apparently a malignant shade may be fooled or deceived as well as propitiated or intimidated. Why the human breath should drive it away I did not discover."

been sighted for several days and our food supplies were running low. Besides myself and Higilak there was only Ikpakhuak in the tent, and he was sound asleep. Higilak divined with my coats as usual, but when she found that the shade of a dead kinsman of Ikpakhuak was recalcitrant and would not leave the bundle she roused her husband from his sleep to propitiate it with fair words and induce it to leave us.

The last instance of divination that I was to witness was tinged with pathos, and would alone have dispelled any doubts I might still have possessed as to Higilak's good faith in these performances. I was paying the old couple one of my final visits before we left their country. Late in the evening Higilak sent [216] the children away to another hut, and she asked me to let her divine by lifting my head. I was lying in my sleeping bag, and Ikpakhuak, the only other person in the hut, closed the door to keep out all visitors. Higilak slipped her belt round my head, and told me to close my eyes. Then they both questioned me, and Higilak lifted my head from time to time for the answers. The whole ceremony lasted perhaps a quarter of an hour. I could understand very few of their questions, partly because my knowledge of the language was imperfect, partly also because, as in most shamanistic performances, they employed a different vocabulary from that in every-day use. Immediately afterwards, however, she told me the reason for the ceremony. The great shaman Ilatsiak had warned them that their son Avranna was threatened with grave danger, and had advised them to obtain help from me. She

entreated me, therefore, and Ikpakhuak supported her request, that after I had left their country and was no longer within reach of an ordinary message, I should send my familiars, tornrait, to their aid whenever they or their kinsmen were in danger or distress. Tusarialutilli, 'Hearken to our call,' they urged me again and again. I told them that sometimes perhaps I should not be able to hear them, and with a sigh Higilak responded, 'Yes, sometimes one can do nothing.'

We have now laid the foundations on which we can build our theory of Copper Eskimo shamanism. Let us consider first the seances, where some familiar spirit is presumed to enter the body of the shaman and to take possession of him, the shaman himself being only the medium. All the utterances are those of the familiar, though they come, as the natives will say themselves, from the lips of the shaman. First it is to be noticed that the man has little or no opportunity for conjuring tricks, seeing that he performs in the open daylight or under the bright light of the lamps in the dance-house; moreover, there are natives all around him so close that they can put out their hands and touch him at any moment. He has to depend therefore on creating the proper 'atmosphere,' both in himself and in his audience. The important seances given by shamans of credit like Uloksak and Ilatsiak always evoke in the spectators a feeling of tense emotional excitement. Usually their minds are keyed up beforehand to the proper pitch by singing and dancing, and especially by the booming notes of the deep-toned

drum. The shaman himself is in a condition of hysteria, or of something that nearly resembles it, brought on at the commencement of his seance by the straining of every muscle, the rolling of his eyes and the ejaculation of cries and strangled gasping sounds. Long practice in self-hypnosis, combined at times perhaps with organic weakness and an inclination towards hallucinations--Ilatsiak had gone through a serious illness when a boy--help to induce the condition more readily. So intense is the strain that the man nearly faints with exhaustion at the close of the performance. The insertion of the teeth of the animal familiar, or the wearing of garments made from its fur, serve, like stage scenery, to increase the illusion. The shaman is not conscious of acting a part; he becomes in his own mind the animal or the shade of the dead man that is deemed to possess him. To his audience, too, this strange figure, with its wild and frenzied appearance, its ventriloquistic cries and its unearthly falsetto gabble, with only a broken word here and there of intelligible speech, is no longer a human being, but the thing it personifies. Their minds become receptive of the wildest imaginings, and they see the strangest and most fantastic happenings. If the shaman ejaculates that he is no longer a man but a bear, forthwith it is a bear that they behold, not a human being; if he says that the dance-house is full of spirits they will see them in every corner. It is in this way, apparently, that most of the tales arise of shamans cutting off their limbs, or flying through the air, or changing to bears and wolves.

There may be conscious fraud in the early stages of a shaman's career, in some cases perhaps all through it. Uloksak's seance when he acquitted me of the charge of murder was almost certainly fraudulent from beginning to end; yet even he firmly [217] believed in the genuineness of the shamanistic powers of Ilatsiak and of Higilak. Even if a shaman begins by consciously deceiving his audience, the constant repetition of the action, combined with auto-suggestion and a belief that others have done what he is pretending to do, must inevitably lead in most cases to his deceiving himself. He will accept as true the wildest tales that are told about him by his audiences, tales that are magnified as they pass from mouth to mouth.

We come now to the other class of shamanistic performance, divination by lifting. In this the shaman's familiar, instead of entering his body and taking possession of him, is supposed to exert its power extraneously by forcing the shade of some dead man or woman to enter the kila and manifest itself and give answers by its weight. (1)

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"1. Sometimes the natives appeared to regard this shade as the offended power responsible for their misfortunes, in which case they tried to intimidate it or to propitiate it with fair words; sometimes as some other shade that was trying to obstruct their enquiries, or else was friendly towards them and prepared to help them with its superior knowledge. In one instance it was not a shade at all, but the familiar spirits that I was believed to control."

The kila may be either the head or the foot of a patient, his clothes, or the clothes of the shaman himself. The frequency with which Higilak employed the method on her own initiative and for her own satisfaction, together with her indifference to the presence or absence of spectators, all go to show that she herself firmly believed in its credibility and was totally unconscious of any deception. She was quite certain that the kila became heavy or light through the active co-operation of the shade, and imagined herself to be more sensitive to its changes than other people. I do not mean that she would have expressed herself in this abstract manner, but that quite plainly she ascribed the uncertainty that others would often feel about the relative weight of the bundle to their not being shamans like herself. It is practically certain that she was deceiving herself unconsciously, and her audience was deceived both with and by her through their assumption of 'spiritual' causes. For even a casual observer could hardly have failed to notice that her hand worked differently for the answers 'yes' and 'no.' Apparently she first formulated the answer in her own mind, and the thought unconsciously stimulated a kind of reflex action in the muscles of her hand, so that the kila really did seem heavy when the answer was 'yes,' and light when it was 'no.'

In concluding this sketch of shamanism I may remark that nothing that I actually saw with my own eyes appeared to suggest the operation of any spiritual or mental forces with which we ourselves are not perfectly familiar. Hysteria, self-hypnosis, and

delusion caused by suggestion are well-known to every psychologist and medical practitioner, and everything that I witnessed could be explained on one or other of these grounds. The natives have many tales of far more wonderful phenomena, phenomena which, if true, would be as mysterious and inexplicable as the much-discussed walking over red-hot stones that is practised by a certain Fijian tribe. But of these marvels I myself saw nothing, and until we have the evidence of some more critical eye-witness than the Eskimo himself, it is safest perhaps to attribute them to the over-wrought imaginations of a people whose knowledge of the workings of our universe is far more limited even than our own; a people who have no conception of our 'natural laws', but in their place have substituted a theory of spiritual causation in which there is no boundary between the possible and the impossible."

2: Stefansson--128 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 787, 783

"If a famine occurs, for instance, a shaman will magically inquire from his familiar spirit why the food has become scarce and the answer is likely to be that some member of the tribe has done such and such a thing in secret. A woman member of the tribe may perhaps have eaten the meat from the wrong rib of a mountain sheep. When the spirit informs the medicineman that the woman has done this, he calls upon her to confess that she has done it. If she confesses the famine will end and all will be well, but if she brazenly asserts that she has done no such things as charged with, then the most serious misfortunes will continue to fall upon the people."

2: Stefansson--128 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 784, 787

"It is common that if a man is sick or has poor success in hunting or if there is any other fact or condition that he wants to change he applies to a shaman to find out what he shall do to attain his ends. The shaman will usually after the performance of suitable ceremonial rites of the summoning of his familiar spirit find out that some hitherto unsuspected thing is really aglernaktok to the man in question and he announces this fact. It may be that the man has been fond of eating the fat at the back of the eye of a caribou and he is told that this is aglernaktok [JMR: i.e., taboo] to him and will remain so until he is full grown, until he is married, until his son kills his first caribou, or up to the consummation of any similar thing. In a few cases it is discovered that a man is aglirktok for life with reference to one or more things."

"The following is a description of what happened at such a [MPK: shamanistic] seance:

They continued to repeat these words [MPK: of the summoning hymn] until at last the shaman announced that Arnakăp$^{s}$ha luk [MPK: Sea Woman] was approaching, and that all the men in the qag$^{s}$je should hold on to him. They immediately threw themselves upon him, for now the Sea Woman had beset him, that is to say her soul had taken up its residence in his body, and she now [26] spoke in a deep voice through the shaman. As a rule she would tell them that the bad hunting was the result of some taboo having been broken, and that the constantly bad weather was due to people's indifference to the traditions of their ancestors. Scarcely had she launched these accusations when the women in their fear began to confess the breaches of taboo they had committed, the men meanwhile fighting desparately [sic] with [MPK: Sea Woman] who had quite taken possession of the shaman's body. He writhed in pain, struck out with his fists and moaned incessantly. They kept a firm hold on him and took care especially that he did not lift his head, as the spirit of the air is capricious and the houses of men only frail. They were afraid that the Sea Woman would level the qag$^{s}$je with the ice and let loose fierce storms, and this was certain to happen if the shaman merely raised his head a little. Then, as soon as women and men had confessed all, the shaman cried in a loud voice that [MPK: Sea Woman] lamp was once more turned the right way up -- indicating that as long as bad hunting lasted the lamp always stood bottom upwards, extinguished and dark. Shortly afterwards the shaman, who was still fighting with the Sea Woman, shouted that now her hair was

smooth and clean again; for as long as all sins are not confessed her hair is usually in the wildest disorder. Only when everything has been put in order again does [MPK: Sea Woman] return to her house by the same route as she has come. A little later the crying of a child was heard, and up through the same hole in the floor of the hut came the child from the bottom of the sea, entered the body of the shaman and spoke through his mouth. It cried, and said that [MPK: Sea Woman] had struck it on the head with a caribou antler because it had let the beasts get out to the people. The child spoke through the shaman with the same deep voice as its mother, for all those from the bottom of the sea speak with a deep voice. Then the child disappeared, and it was now igpiArjuk's turn to appear in the same manner as the others had done. He, too, complained that he had been misused because he had helped to release the seals. Then he disappeared into the depths and the seance was over. The beasts had come back to be hunted by the people of the village.

It is said that [MPK: Sea Woman] comes riding up to the qag$^{s}$je on a seal; this opens a way up to the surface of the sea, and it remains open just like a tube, so that both her child and her husband can easily make the journey up to the surface alone.

For four days after [MPK: Sea Woman] has been called up to the qag$^{s}$je no woman must sew and no man must do any work whatever; no block of snow must be cut and no one must drive a sledge. If the men go out to the breathing holes they must walk, and, if [27] they catch a seal, there must be no eating of its liver out on the ice as is the usual custom.

In answer to a question it is expressly averred that it has been forgotten how [MPK: Sea Woman] originally got to the bottom of the sea. All that is known is that she has always been there.

[MPK: Sea Woman] is also called a giver of strength, because she gives people sea beasts if only they do not break their taboo."

3: Rasmussen--30-31 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo-1-3
116, 787, 791

"At Malerualik I had the opportunity of seeing a number of seances with shamans. They were all extremely naive and easily seen through if one watched at all critically. I was mostly impressed by the manner in which the shamans tried to get into touch with their helping spirits. Qagtaq, for instance, often shamanized in a snow hut lying next door to ours. While people sat expectantly inside the hut, tense with the uncanniness of the scene and gripped by the mysteriousness of the unknown, Qagtaq was wandering about half naked in the snow-storm outside for the purpose of getting inspiration; sometimes he would lie in a snow drift, and half naked as he was, he naturally soon got into a miserable condition. After a little while he would go into the snow hut, shivering and wretched; he was then in a state of great excitement, looked round in a bewildered manner, and then started to tell about his visions out there in the snow-storm, speaking in riddles and often entirely incomprehensibly, in a high, shrill falsetto. All one could understand was that he had seen both dead and spirits. His sentences were interrupted by wild howls, and old women, stretching their imagination to the utmost, tried to reconstruct their meaning. The women, who had had much experience of shamanizing, drew upon a very lively fantasy, and all their suggested interpretations of Qagtaq's mystic oracular words finally built up so much material to work upon, that at last it was possible to construct an account of what it was the spirits had said through the shaman. Thus it was more a reconstruction based upon guesswork than an actual announcement.

3: Rasmussen--30-31 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo-2
116, 787, 791

One young woman, Taiphuina, who seemed to be very intelligent, had once been a shaman disciple buy had given it up, as she 'could not lie well enough'. The shamans sought in vain to encourage her, saying 'Once you start trying, and people are listening, you can almost always hit upon something.' But it was all of no use.

Taiphuina's candid admission, given in answer to some questions I put to her, aroused great merriment among the people, where there [31] were several shamans -- in fact it was they who laughed heartiest; for they knew that people were so enthralled by all that is incomprehensible between earth and sky that nothing could shake the faith of their audience when a real seance was going on, no matter what was said.

All the seances I attended while with the Umingmaktôrmiut were extremely naive in tendency and performance. I was only at Agiaq that, during the course of a protracted snow storm, I was present at a seance that was so well thought out and performed that it really made an impression upon me. Otherwise during all seances and demonstrations the audience is credited with almost fabulous faith in the trustworthiness of the shaman and the actual presence of the spirits; to those who did not share this faith it was impossible to retain the illusion that it was higher powers that were signifying their existence. In addition, their conjuring tricks were so childish and so perfectly easy to see through that the critical looker-on could only feel astonishment that they could be taken seriously at all. It is only the psyche of the shaman and his audience that prevent the whole show from being reduced to humbug and deceit. And of this there is no question.

For the shamans themselves consider their various tricks to be means that bring them in touch with the spirits. The relationship between the natural and the supernatural is in itself so problematic that it is of no consequence if there is some 'cheating' in the ritual during an invocation."

3: Rasmussen--32 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 787

"divination by lifting.

"It is possible, without holding a special seance, to consult the spirits by means of the so-called qilanEq, already well-known from the previous descriptions of other Eskimo groups. The person through whom the spirits are to speak, qilâ, is laid on the platform with an under jacket under his or her head; qilajɔq, the one who is to consult the spirits, then says: 'Let a spirit whom one may consult, let a spirit whom one may consult, be brought here.' When this has been repeated often enough qila' becomes heavy. qilajɔq, who holds a thong tied round one of qila's legs, can no longer lift the leg, and must then cry: take take , 'Just look, just look! Now try to tell us something, you who usually come to us.'

It is the helping spirits that come when thus called, and the one who calls them can get them to answer, though only through his own questions, for the spirits only answer yes or no during qilanEq. They answer yes by making qila' heavy, and no by making it light. Instead of a human being qilâ [MPK: The different phonetic symbols used with this word are not explained.] may also be a special spirit stick, although among the Umingmaktôrmiut this form seems to be rare. Both shamans and the uninitiated can commune with the spirits in this manner."

"Shamanism. May 15 we missed our primus stove 'needle'--[291] it may have been taken by someone or it may have got lost. A woman angatkuk [shaman], I-ku-tok [by name], offered to get it for us (by witchcraft) if I paid for the performance. This I refused to do unless it were a success--in which event I would give her a small file. That suited her, and the performance began. As Natkusiak understands them [the shamanistic performances] somewhat better than I, it was arranged he should act in my part and 'say yes' for me. There were about 15 persons in our tent and 50 or 60 outside listening. The woman got a free floor space about 1 1/2 by 3 feet in the middle of the tent, where she stood up. She began at first quietly, saying in an ordinary tone and manner that she would first look for the lost articles 'apkuota' (1) --the 'road', I suppose, by which it was taken away when stolen. Where was it when it was stolen? In that box? Where was the box? In what part of the box was it? Was she to find the thief? Was she to get her spirit to find the 'road' of the thief? (to 19 out of 20 at least of her questions the answer was 'yes').

Most of her questions [the shaman] asked of me, but some she asked of others. Not only the person asked but a half a dozen others would answer 'yes' in chorus, or else [they answered ] by other affirmatives and urgings to 'go on,' 'describe the thief,' etc.

Gradually [the shaman] became more excited and little by little she narrowed her eyes till they were finally held closely shut. Then of a sudden she changed her tone of voice,

"1. Apkuota - its path; throughfare or channel by which it traveled."

evidently now trying to imitate an old man both by tone of speech and by hoarse laughing. She now announced that she was so-and-so (the name escaped me--it was no doubt the name of the spirit that now possessed her). 'Ha, I see the road! It did not go out by the tent door; it went out by that corner of the tent! (As a matter of fact, our visitors used to come and go under any but the back side of our tent.) She goes to the village! It is not a man; it is a woman. She had hidden the needle in her boot. She has on a pair of 'fancy' boots.' (Here followed a detailed description of [the thief's] costume, but as most women dress alike, no one could recognize the description.)

[The listeners now commenced asking eager questions of the shaman.] 'Tell us, is she old or young? Is she a big woman?' [292] etc. [But the sorceress kept on as if she did not hear.] 'Oh, now I cannot see clearly; there is a fog coming over me. But I see one thing. She goes to a house a little east of the middle of the village. [The audience:] "Which house? which house?") The house has snow walls and a tent roof (nine-tenths of all the houses had)--it has a peaked tent roof (three-fourths of the houses had) (audience: 'What sort of gear outside the house? Tell us and we will recognize the house'). There is a seal spear; there are two seal spears (a common number--most houses had two families). I cannot see more, the fog darkens. (Here she became more quiet. After being possessed by the spirit she spoke in hoarse shrieks. By now she was out of breath and tired.) I am now myself again, I am now no longer so-and-so.'

Of a sudden the shaman staggered as if to fall backwards, then regained herself and began to mutter rapidly and not harshly. It was now said she was possessed by a Kablunak (turnnrak). (1) There were apparently no real words in this muttering (i.e. no Eskimo or any other speech), but it was said she was now speaking Kablunat (white men's) language. There were constant repetitions of -a-tji, -la-tji, -ta-tji, etc., reminding one strongly of Athabascan Indian speech, and almost exactly like our Tannaumirk's alleged imitations of Loucheux talk.

When all was done (about ten minutes of mutterings), the woman announced that the thief had left the village. She then assumed her natural voice and the performance was over. As two or three families had left that morning, starting east towards the bottom of the Sound, it was concluded one of the women [of those families] was the thief. A man offered to go get the needle [from them]. No one seemed to doubt he would get it. I offered the man the file if he would go, as the woman acknowledged she had failed to get the needle for me. She was, however, to get some pay also if the man succeeded. The man was gone about six hours, and came back unsuccessful. With him came back the whole suspected party, apparently to assert their innocence.

A man angatkuk now offered to try. His performance consisted [293] in 'ceremonially' removing from the primus stove box every article it contained except the (glass)

"1. Kablunak=white man, European; turn-nrak=spirit."

alcohol bottle. This he feared, and I had to take it out for him. Fearing this was considered by the rest to be a sign of great wisdom. None of them had known enough to fear it and several had touched it [for it had looked harmless to them and it was only the supernatural wisdom of the Great Shaman that saw the insidious peril of this transparent thing that looked like ice but wasn't.] He then stuck his head into the box and kept it there three or four minutes, lifting and setting down the top several times meanwhile (his head all the time in the box). He finally emerged and announced he could not see the road by which the needle went. He said he had not been looking for the thief, merely for the 'road' of the needle."

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8



monotonous songs to the accompaniment of a drum. At times their dances were interspersed with strange religious ceremonies, always fascinating to watch and occasionally difficult to comprehend. They knew nothing of Christianity. Their forefathers had taught them to believe in a goddess dwelling at the bottom of the sea who controlled both the winter storms and the supply of seals. They did not worship her as we understand worship, but they held her in great awe, and often tried to secure her goodwill by persuasion or by threats. Many of their misfortunes were laid directly to her door; others were ascribed to the spirits of the dead, or to the machinations of sorcerers. Their sole defence against these imaginary foes lay in their shamans or medicine-men, who claimed to summon into their bodies powerful spirits of men and animals that had voluntarily placed themselves under human control. The medicine-men were thus the physicians, the prophets, and the priests of their little communities. Speaking as the mouthpieces of their spirits, they elucidated the past and foretold the future; and they sent their protecting spirits to bring back the stolen souls of the sick or to compel the sea-goddess to deliver up the seals she withheld from the starving Eskimos. Yet there were many occasions in life when even they could give no assistance, and the people, realizing this, accepted their fate with the fortitude customary to their race.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

## AMONG THE SNOW-HUTS

At the first dance we attended, a medicine-man gave an exhibition of his powers on behalf of two natives who had failed to capture any seals. He made a short speech from the centre of the ring, but suddenly broke off with a cry of pain and covered his eyes with his hands. Low groans shook his body; the protecting spirit that entered him seemed to rack his frame with agony. He raised his head and stared at us, his eyes wild with frenzy and his mouth working convulsively, although not a sound escaped his lips. The spectators on every side flung questions at him, and he turned eagerly from one to another, nodding his head whenever the answer was "Yes." In this way he informed us that two men had died recently somewhere to the eastward. The first spirit then left him as suddenly as it had entered, and a second, that took its place, restored his power of speech, but left his frenzy unchanged. In a weak falsetto he announced that the two hunters had alarmed the seals with a hatchet, but that the protecting spirit speaking through his lips had now removed the curse, and their next seal-hunt would be successful.

The medicine-man's performance lasted over half an hour, two or three more spirits taking possession of him in quick succession. The last refused to depart, and made him stagger so heavily that I thought he would faint. The spectators asked me to tap him on the head with some matches, those marvellous fire-

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123 sticks that only the white man knew how to manufacture; but even they were not powerful enough to restore his wandering senses. Perhaps my hand would be more efficacious. I laid it on his temple, and saw his eyes rest on me without a gleam of intelligence. Then the madness passed out of them, a pleased smile broke over his countenance, and, quietly turning away, he began a casual conversation with some of the bystanders.

771 Performances of this kind revealed to me the heart of Eskimo religion. The natives trusted in their medicine-men, and the medicine-men, with rare exceptions, believed themselves gifted with supernatural powers. The spirits that wander unseen came at their bidding and obeyed their commands. At times they came unsummoned, and a man raved on the hill-sides or on the frozen sea where no one beheld his frenzy.

771 Hysteria is peculiarly common around the Polar basin;
158 the long winter darkness and the loneliness and silence
171 of the hunter's life make the Arctic peoples more susceptible to this disorder than the rest of the human race. So religion and hysteria went closely hand in hand.

114 After measuring all the adults in this village I
125 arranged with a native to guide me to another some
114 forty miles farther west. We had travelled about half
837 a mile when, looking back, I noticed with surprise that
574 a woman was following in our trail. I turned to my

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756 me, a few of my Eskimo friends still believed in my innocence, and sought for an influential medicine-man who could unravel the mystery of the young man's death. Knife's arrival was well timed, for no medicine-man in the district enjoyed greater prestige. The familiar spirits of which he was the mouthpiece spoke infallible truth, and whether they pronounced me innocent or guilty the verdict would carry credence everywhere.

Palaiyak returned from the snow-huts on the beach one evening and whispered in my ear that Knife was in the dance-house preparing to hold his investigation. I calculated the chances quickly. Knife knew that I spoke his language, and it was not in Eskimo nature to accuse a man of murder to his face. Moreover he was crafty, and would consult his own interests before everything else. At the present moment he sorely needed ammunition and other goods that I could supply. Would he dare to name me guilty to my face? I decided to attend his séance and hear the verdict myself.

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[533] The people had ceased dancing when I entered the hut and were whiling away the moments by singing without the drum. Half of them were drawn up in a circle; the remainder, for whom there was no room in the ring, formed knots of two and three in the background. Over in one corner stood Cockney, our English cook, who had been quietly watching the

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performances. He did not know that I was accused of murder, or that anything more was in progress than an ordinary dance, and it seemed wiser not to enlighten him. Knife himself sat on the sleeping-platform, paying no heed to what went on around him; but he glanced at me furtively when I entered and looked a trifle disconcerted.

The singing continued but a few minutes longer, when the impatient audience entreated Knife to summon his familiar spirits. He sat now with closed eyes, half dozing as it seemed. Suddenly he gasped, choking cries burst from his lips, and, staggering into the centre of the ring, he motioned me to stand near him. A quiver passed over the audience; at last the truth of the murder would be revealed. The choking cries gave place to wild gibberish, which his father, standing beside me, interpreted as the language of white men. Knife, less hysterical than he appeared, heard the old man's words, and, staring straight into my face, repeated his gibberish. *"Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum,"* I answered immediately in the first words of Latin that came into my head; and *"pamakalawilinilitoolooka,"* or something like it, he responded in his gibberish. My Latin gave out, and I continued the conversation in French, fearing to use English lest Cockney might ruin the little drama by some false move. The impression on the audience was immense; their shaman really was inspired by a

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627 white man's spirit, for how else could he understand
787 and converse with me? So when he ceased his gibberish, and in broken syllables pronounced that it was a white man in a far distant country who had caused the young man's death, the faith that moves mountains was not stronger than their conviction of my innocence.

All this time Cockney had been viewing our antics with the greatest alarm. Knife held me hypnotized, he believed, and the tense faces of the audience turned in my direction made him dread some untoward incident. He dared not abandon me to my peril while he warned our companions at the house above. So he stood, like a vigilant sentry, prepared to leap to my rescue and battle against the overwhelming odds the moment the whistle sounded.

The séance lasted about two hours, and contained several minor incidents in which I played a leading rôle. Knife's audience was in the mood to credit any deception, and he was too shrewd to lose his opportunity. At one stage he led his first wife into the ring to execute a "white man's" reel, a kind of square dance they had learned at Great Bear Lake; and in his wild gibberish, made intelligible to me by signs, he bade me summon Cockney to join hands with the younger wife. The dance may not have been artistic, but it impressed the spectators more than ever with the wondrous knowledge of their medicine-man, who could both

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speak the white man's language and perform his intricate dances.

The performance ended at last, and the people began to disperse to their huts. Cockney, who was among the first to vanish, hastened to the station to describe my abnormal behaviour and organize a strong party that would bring me safely home. But before he had finished his narrative I myself arrived on the scene and offered a more reasonable explanation of my conduct.

The natives living out in the strait became very friendly again when the charge of murder was lifted from my head. I visited their settlement twice for periods of three or four days, staying each time with my old acquaintance, Ikpuck. The sun was now much higher in the sky, and a mildness in the atmosphere indicated the approach of spring. Snow-huts would soon be untenable; the slight melting of their ceilings around noon had already caused some of the people to move into large tents made of caribou skins. With the advent of longer days the hunters captured more seals, and the women were packing the surplus blubber into large bags to cache on the coast until autumn. Everything seemed to be changing. The various bands that had united in midwinter were separating out again and moving to different sealing-grounds; and every fortnight, as the new sealing-grounds became exhausted, they moved their settlements forward a few more miles.

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them with little success. On May 23 we saw the first Lapland longspur, and three days later flesh-flies, the forerunners of clouds of mosquitoes. In a pool of water at the base of a hill lay a tiny mouse, drowned by a sudden thaw before it could escape from its burrow.

The increasing brownness of the hills made me uneasy. We could discover no trace of the northern natives, though some of them had visited the Lake of Dancing the previous summer. Icehouse, who was a medicine-woman, announced that she would enquire at midnight from her guardian spirits, and our whole party gathered inside the tent to hear the oracle. The spirit of a wolf entered into her, and even thrust its upper canines out of the corners of her mouth; but it spoke in a mystic language that no one could interpret. We thronged anxiously around it, beseeching it to explain; and at last we heard this message:

> "To Big Lake come your Great Sound kinsmen.
> Travel thither with your sleds.
> Before the snow flies turn ye back again."

The oracle was obeyed. By noon our little caravan was slowly threading its way among the hills, heading north-east toward Big Lake. Ikpuck guided the course. The shoeing of frozen mud that once covered the runners of his sled had fallen away at the Lake of Dancing, and the bare wood grated harshly over the snow. My own sled, following behind, glided along

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silent and deserted. Icehouse summoned her guardian spirits again to confirm her former prophecy that the Tormiat were already on their way to visit us; and, with renewed hopes, we settled down to await their arrival, resuming our daily routine of fishing and the chase.

We waited in vain for four days, and even Icehouse became alarmed lest her prophecy should prove false. Believing that I might have mysterious powers beyond their comprehension she cunningly made me an accomplice in a third séance. She borrowed my two shirts of caribou fur, after I had turned into bed, bound them with her belt, and poised the bundle with the loose end of the cord. We expected her then to summon her guardian spirits and question them, discovering their answers by the weight of the shirts; but instead of summoning her own spirits she summoned mine, and bade me instruct them to lighten the bundle for "yes" and increase its weight for "no."

"The Tormiat will come tomorrow," my shirts announced.

"Is the bundle not lying?" asked The Runner, addressing himself to me.

The question embarrassed me; it seemed to reflect on my personal integrity. But how could I tell whether the Tormiat would come or not? I referred him back to Icehouse. "Ask Icehouse," I said. "She is a medicine-woman. She should know."

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lifted the veil of secrecy a few inches the other raised it higher, lest silence should rob him of a share in the reward. In the end it was not their secretiveness that hampered our researches, but our ignorance of their ways of thought and their own inability to narrate a story from the ground upward; for they invariably began with the crisis, so to speak, and worked backward and forward, with many omissions and repetitions, on the tacit assumption that our minds moved in the same groove as theirs and that explanations were needless.

If the preceding winter had been unusually mild, this one was unusually stormy. Gales from east and west—the two prevailing quarters—swept the shelterless ice-field day after day until its covering of snow grew hard like a macadamized road. Then the wind blew narrow furrows along it, *sulci* with crests so sharp that they hurt the feet. Hunters who ventured out to seal could find no breathing-holes amid the driving snow, and with difficulty reached their homes again. The first gales passed unheeded. The people had fish and caribou meat stored outside their huts, and pokes of blubber for their lamps. Gathered inside the dance-house, they could laugh at the howling blizzards and while away the hours in song and gymnastics. But when their food was exhausted, when half their lamps had expired from want of oil, dance-songs

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gave place to incantations, and shaman after shaman sent forth his spirit to seek the dread sea-goddess at the bottom of the ocean and force her to relent. Temporary lulls in the storms drove every hunter to the sealing-grounds; on calm days they left the settlement two or three hours before dawn and returned in the darkness. As the dogs dragged the booty into the passageways the children threw themselves on the seal carcasses and poured water into their mouths to please their spirits and induce other seals to rise to the hunters' harpoons. Dolphin and Union Strait was one of the richest sealing-grounds along the Arctic coast, and the natives with whom we camped escaped any dire privations this winter; but in Coronation Gulf, as we learned afterward, many Eskimos ate the sealskin covers of their bows, and some old people perished through the hardships they were compelled to endure.

The storms were responsible for other tragedies. A boy of about six years, the only son of a strange, priest-like individual whom we knew as "The Prophet," was blown from the roof of a snow-hut during a gale, breaking his thigh just above the knee. The father, aided by an elderly medicine-man, set the leg in short splints bound round with a caribou hide. As soon as I heard of the accident I offered to take the lad to our station, where we would care for him

## THROUGH BLIZZARDS TO SPRING

Spring came suddenly about the middle of March, when the thermometer rose well above zero. Our station then became the Mecca for tribes from as far east as the Musk-ox people, who, like the nearer Eskimos, clamoured for trade goods, rifles, and ammunition. These were not the people I had visited three or four weeks previously, but kinsmen from the second camp a few miles farther east, who had lingered at their new sealing-ground until milder weather enabled them to undertake the long journey to Bernard Harbour without hardship. Their leader was a short, white-bearded medicine-man, brusque but always dignified in his movements, and with a shrewd, kindly face that attracted immediate attention. Undoubtedly he possessed great force of character, for his tribesmen reverenced him as a father and complied with all his wishes; nominally the Eskimos recognize no chiefs among themselves, considering every man the equal of every other.

The old man taught me some of his ancient lore, and even summoned a familiar spirit that I might record a shamanistic séance on the phonograph. His followers credited him with the most fantastic powers; he could fly through the air like a bird, go down into the ocean like a fish, see what was happening hundreds of miles away. But the old man never boasted of these things; they might be true, he said, and they might not, for he lost all consciousness of himself when the familiar spirits took possession of his body.

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787 spirits took possession of his body. We listened to their stories courteously but incredulously, for we had heard similar tales of other medicine-men; and when he quietly informed us one morning that something was wrong with our schooner, that the thing which made it go had broken during the night, we paid no attention. What could he know about the vessel or its engine, since he had never seen a schooner before, nor indeed any boat that moved under sails or power? Yet that same afternoon we discovered a serious crack in the rafter supporting the roof of our kitchen, and the rafter was the schooner's jib-boom! Was it merely coincidence, I wonder, or did the old man really possess some uncanny power of which we, for all our vaunted knowledge, were ignorant?

000 As the days grew longer and the air warmer, the harbour became more deserted. Cox and O'Neill had already gone eastward to continue their survey of the coast, Anderson and Chipman had gone west to examine the Crocker River, and Johansen was explor-
221 ing the south coast of Victoria Island. The Musk-ox people returned to their home, and the local natives began to separate into small bands and move toward different hunting-grounds.

123 Suddenly a case of ammunition disappeared, and the
756 handful of natives who lingered beside us disclaimed
627 all knowledge of the theft. Our old friend Knife could have enlightened us, for he always kept abreast

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ered up the empty gasolene cans to convert into cooking-pots, and scrap bars of iron to hammer into chisels and harpoon shafts. Sometimes they gleaned more widely than we desired, even carrying away two tarpaulins that covered a cache; but they surrendered these ill-gotten trophies with great good-humour. Many offered to help us for a trifling consideration, such as a half-dozen matches or an old, disused knife; but there were few tasks that lay within their power. To distract their attention from more serious matters we sent them to help Johansen, who was devoting every spare moment to augmenting his collections of the various plants and insects. So all one afternoon a stream of natives flowed steadily toward his tent, calling, "Matches, Johansen, matches," each individual holding out in payment a fly or a grub sadly crushed between thumb and forefinger. How many matches they obtained I cannot say; but since the biological collections underwent no increase, the experiment was not continued.

Ikpuck and his family, who were to keep watch over the station between the time of our departure and Girling's arrival, pitched their tent beside us for a short time before joining their countrymen at the fishing-creek. I visited him each day to talk over old times, and to observe his progress on the new steel runners that he was fitting to his sled. One evening Icehouse sent away the children and asked me to lie on

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• 787 123 my back with closed eyes, as she wished to interrogate my guardian spirit through the familiar process of head-lifting. She then passed her belt-cord under my head and summoned my spirit to answer her, testing the weight of my head for the answers. Both she and Ikpuck, who sat on the opposite side, appeared very solemn and spoke in hushed tones, so that I could not follow their conversation. Neither could I understand some of the questions she addressed to my "spirit," for she used many expressions confined to songs and religious ceremonies. Yet I realized that she was envisioning the future, when her white son would have gone far away; and she was beseeching my spirit to come to their aid, even from the land of the white man, whenever her family was afflicted with trouble or sickness and called to me for help. "Hearken to our call," she exclaimed again and again; and Ikpuck from his side echoed her entreaty.

We sat in silence after the ceremony, absorbed in our own thoughts. The pathos of their appeal weighed on me heavily. A few short months before I had come out of the mists, a strange and unexpected visitor, to interrupt the peaceful current of their lives. They had received me into their family, nursed me in sickness, clothed me and fed me in times of stress and starvation, bestowed on me the same trust, the same affection, that they gave to their own children. Little it was that I had been able to give them in return. Now

they were making their one final appeal. What had my "spirit" answered? What could it answer? When trouble came upon them, as it surely must, and they cried to me for help, would they think me ungrateful if no help came? At last I turned to Icehouse and said, "Sometimes, you know, it is not possible to help." And she answered sadly, "Yes. There are many evil spirits surrounding us, and sometimes no help is possible."

I finished the packing of my specimens before the end of June, and since the heavy ice in the strait would prevent our sailing for at least two weeks, I thought I might travel down to Cape Krusenstern for a farewell view of some Eskimos who were still fishing in the various streams. Patsy was to accompany me, and, with the consent of Ikpuck and Icehouse, I invited Jennie to go with us. She danced with glee at the prospect. Without further delay, we rolled up our packs, loaded two dogs with extra provisions, and marched away over the tundra.

Jennie was the merriest of companions, and the most useful. She laughed when the dogs chased a sandpiper, she laughed when she stumbled over a niggerhead. Her laughter was infectious, and no merrier party ever tramped those northern meadows. She was only twelve years of age, or thirteen at the most, with all a child's love of play and pastime; yet already she knew some of the responsibilities of her sex, and at the